MINUTES
ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, March 4, 2013
CNS 200 (The John Carroll Room) 3:30 – 5:00 PM

Present: Professors Bhattacharya, Dallavalle, Dennin, Downie, Epstein (Executive Secretary), He, Huntley, Keenan (Chair), Kelly, Kohli, Lasseter, Petrino, Rafalski, Rakowitz (General Faculty Secretary), Shea, Walker-Canton, and Winn; Deans Babington, Beal and Gibson; SVPAA Fitzgerald, S.J.; FUSA President Robert Vogel

Regrets: Professor Lane, Deans Crabtree and Franzosa.

Invited guests: Professors Betsy Bowen and Paula Gill Lopez (item 7a).

1. Presidential Courtesy
SVPAA Fitzgerald reported that Dean Gibson and Assoc. Dean Ligas led DSB faculty in preparing a sixth year AACSB maintenance of Accreditation report. The Chair of last year’s external review committee plus one new outside reviewer commented positively on our sixth year report and are recommending to the AACSB Accreditation Committee that the DSB be reaccredited. The letter going to the AACSB noted that the faculty has addressed the issues of research standards, strategic planning, and the updating of pedagogy and curriculum based on the assessment of students’ learning. SVPAA Fitzgerald noted that the Blizzard named Nemo caused us to lose another Monday.

MOTION (Epstein/Petrino): To re-order the agenda so that the first item is 7.a.
MOTION PASSED: 17 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention

2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty
None.

3. Report from the Executive Secretary
No correspondence or oral reports.

7. New business
a. Committee on Conference with the Board of Trustees: Report from December meeting and guidance for March meeting

Prof. Gill Lopez reported on the December 6th meeting with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. The meeting began with an update from SVPAA Paul Fitzgerald, SJ, introducing the new institutional dashboard indicators, followed by a report by Professor Mark LeClair on the new Masters in Public Administration.

Then the group addressed the agenda items developed jointly with John Baldovin, SJ, chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, based on these questions: How do we maintain a high quality liberal arts education? What are our goals for the next 2-3 years? Specific items for discussion were identified:
1. Examine the dashboard indicators in more depth.
2. Question the wisdom of developing a distance learning model.
3. Address our ongoing student gender imbalance.
4. Bring discussion of the cost of faculty into dialogue with other costs.
5. Ask about the use of faculty expertise vs outside consultants.
6. Discuss the value of the Jesuit brand, and how this is being employed.

Discussion. Downie: did they engage you in real discussion, or did it seem to be more pro forma? Gill Lopez: very engaged, because we had jointly developed these agenda items. Downie: did this meeting seem different, compared to earlier meetings? Bowen: yes, not a qualitative difference, but a more wide ranging, less scripted discussion than in the past. Does this mean something? Not sure. Kohli: one issue was the affordable education question. There were still some around the table that think that faculty is the drain on this question. Also, marketing issues came out as a common concern from the board. The context seemed to be how to cut costs. Gill Lopez: the idea that we were all interested in the idea of marketing drew the group together. I know from talking to John Baldovin that he is very excited about working with us. Dennin: did you directly address the issue of faculty versus other costs? Kohli: not much. We did address that students care about this. Gill Lopez: this is something to be addressed next time with more data, so that we can name precisely where the student satisfaction margin lies. Fitzgerald, SJ: best discussion I’ve seen with the committee on conference. I’m grateful to the committee for this new approach. It’s very important for the trustees to have a good sense of the academic program, they are not in the first place the ones who should be indicating where we should go; this is our task. Rafalski: did you spend much time talking about the distance learning issue? Was there a clear consensus about what this entails? Bowen: one trustee has been hearing about MOOCS. Gill Lopez: we did not spend a lot of time on this, it seemed to be the concern of the one person raising it. Kohli: we did ask about how to reconcile that pedagogy with a Jesuit pedagogy, this is not an answer to cost problem. Gill Lopez: what we want, as a deliverable for next time with more data, is that we can name specifically where the student satisfaction margin lies. We know that the dashboard indicators about advising, but we also know that the real issue is that students are dissatisfied with our online registration process.

What direction does the Academic Council offer for the next meeting? Downie: a distinction is needed, that specific accurate data about faculty costs versus administration costs should also note faculty who are doing administrative work. We could also note where we could cut specific costs by eliminating academic programs, as a way of indicating that we are serious about cost cutting too. Epstein: I’ve been hearing from faculty about how dispirited they are about faculty salary situation. A younger faculty member told him that every year he is facing a salary problem. This year it seems to be especially dispiriting, last year the faculty made big concessions under the claim of institutional crisis. We then find out much later that the university in fact ran a surplus, and that very little of that surplus went back to faculty salaries. This year, instead of treating those as temporary sacrifices in the face of crisis, the administration wants to make even deeper cuts under the banner of “long term sustainability”. The faculty have always been ready to face long-term stability questions. We have always said that we do not want to face this drama every year. But the administration says that they don’t want to do that. One important thing to bring to the board’s attention is that they will need to identify proper long-term goals for proper compensation for faculty. Well, what are the long-term prospects for the university? Where does the academic division fit into that?

MOTION: (Epstein/Dennin): to authorize the Committee on Conference to consult with the salary committee and faculty members of the ACEC in advance of the next board meeting.

Discussion: Kohli: the faculty should frame these issues in the context of academic excellence. Epstein: the board would be free to frame this in any way that they see fit. Dennin: I represent the faculty on the Board of Trustee’s finance committee. We just met, and the new budget has a 20% contribution to health care built right into it. I would like to be able to express the will of the
faculty on this. Rakowitz: I support the motion, is it correct that the committee on conference may consult with other Board committees? Yes.

**MOTION PASSED: 16 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention**

Keenan: anything else for the committee on conference? Huntley: They should request an external cost audit for all divisions. Before we consider any cost cutting, the board needs to insist on an external cost audit. We don't seem to have a plan in place for assigning indirect costs. Shea: I question the notion of faculty being viewed as a drain. Part of what I would hope is that at some point there would be data presented in terms of grant monies brought in by faculty that offer resources, scholarships, etc. Why are faculty seen as expense only, not income? What about students who return to us for graduate degrees? A large number of students come back, they put their money where their mouth is when they come back for graduate degrees. Notice that the fundraising people call faculty grants on their sheet, when they account for their own productivity. Sometimes this is appropriate, sometimes not. This is a problem. Bowen: let me clarify the desired outcome. Do we want the trustees to do something specific? Huntley: Request the external audit of our cost accounting procedures. Downie: they need to see the rate of spending on faculty. We need to show accurate numbers; and comparative numbers from our peer schools, as appropriate. Bhattacharya: HR metrics will tell you that learning is not a cost, it is an investment. Gill Lopez: we should ask for the audit up front. Epstein: we need to look at academic vs non-academic metrics and include benchmarking.

5. Petitions for immediate hearing:

Fitzgerald, SJ, observed 1) that we had lost a Monday due to the recent snow, and 2) that Monday/Thursday classes are already short for the semester. Dallavalle: We should set, in advance of the semester, contingency plans for class days that must be made up in case these are impacted by weather, etc. Bhattacharya: we used to do this with the Tuesday/Monday set up, but that was a mess for schools with grad programs.

**MOTION (Fitzgerald/Winn): To declare the first reading day of the exam period a Monday, to make up for the recent snow day.**

Vogel says that there will be a concert the evening before the first reading day. Rakowitz: I speak against, the schedule does not begin with two reading days, it is one reading day, then two exams days. If we do anything, we should use the Monday after Easter as a Monday. Kelly: did you say this would be optional? Lasseter: I speak against the motion, as we only have the one reading day. We also lost all the classes after noon on the previous Friday. We should cut our losses. He: I speak reluctantly against the motion, the idea is great, but the schedule has already absorbed this, it is too late. An extra day late in the semester will be more trouble than it’s worth. In the future, we need some clear days set aside to accommodate these disruptions.

**MOTION FAILS: In favor 2, opposed 13, abstention 2.**

4. Council Subcommittee Reports

**d. Subcommittee on calendar issues**

Epstein: The report begins on p. 3. The council formed this committee at the October 2012 meeting, charged to review the academic calendar and to propose changes as appropriate. One thing that comes up frequently is the length of the semester. To re-affirm, there are no state requirements for semester length at private universities. NEASC refers to federal guidelines for typical semester length as “15 weeks of instruction time.” This seems to suggest that the normal course is 15 weeks, but does this include exams? Not clear. We are similar to our peers in having a 14-week semester
followed by an exam week. But, while we meet this norm regularly, this year and next year we are not doing this in the spring semester. Why? Because the JOR requires that we start when we do. With Monday holidays, and without academic Mondays we have a relatively short and lop-sided semester, short on Mondays and Thursdays. The number of MR classes is conspicuously fewer than TF classes, and Monday turbos are short by 3 weeks. Ending time is also an issue. The administration is concerned about our Fall semester ending too close to Christmas, and we have faculty contract language that has the year starting on 1 September. In the spring, there are two bookends: in the beginning we have JOR language that says that there should be about a month between the two semesters. The other issue is that there is a tradition of having commencement on the weekend before Memorial Day, as well as some kind of senior week. We therefore need to have commencement a full week before Memorial Day. But many universities do have commencement on Memorial Day weekend. In the past, faculty were told that the leases of beach residences prohibited this, but this is not true any more.

So, Lane and Epstein find that, to address the brevity and imbalance of the spring semester, we could
1. revert to designating the Tuesday after Presidents Day as a Monday,
2. start spring earlier,
3. start fall earlier, or
4. end spring semester later.

The subcommittee felt that the most reasonable approach would be to do the Monday/Tuesday. The reintroduction of academic Mondays would have problems, of course. We should simply allow flexibility in the implementation. We are talking about undergrad teaching on Monday, so the subcommittee would recommend that there be no undergraduate Monday turbos. Finally, it does seem that we will have storms, so we do need to build into the official academic calendar some flexibility, so that we can have days to make up snow days.

Discussion. Vogel: Beach house rentals begin September 1, that would be a factor. Downie: starting a week before would be problematic. Fitzgerald: the easier fix would be to remove the JOR language about the month. Epstein: the easiest one is to move commencement. Fitzgerald: Mark Reed said that the staff greatly appreciate having the 3 days weekend to rest up. Rakowitz: Why did we lose the Tuesday/Mondays? These were difficult for adjuncts, who need a dependable schedule. Kohli: if we could at least get rid of the turbo option on Mondays, that would help. Epstein: I think that’s an easy and important one, but I don’t think we can do only this. The published academic calendar for next spring has a week and a half more for the TF sections. We need to address this. The simplest way to address this is to have an academic Monday. Downie: in general I think the Monday/Tuesday is too complicated. I think we should increase the number of people living off campus. We could also have senior week begin on Tuesday, we could also have a random Tuesday off. Dennin: who decides when commencement is? Fitzgerald: Mary Frances Malone plans Commencement. Who also has the authority to say we’ll move commencement? I do, in terms of moving inside in case of rain. For many families, traveling on Memorial Day would be more convenient. Walker-Canton: what about just adding 6 minutes to the Monday-Thursday classes? Epstein: I tried to add time to classes, didn’t work. Walker-Canton: I mean officially. Rakowitz: Robbin has asked us (in a later agenda item) to think about our time codes in general. If we set up a subcommittee to do this, we could think about asymmetry in the length of M/Th vs T/F class meetings. Another thing that would clarify this, if there were no concerns about leases, we could ask faculty about preferences for starting earlier versus having commencement later. Epstein: we have a crowded agenda. I suggest that we do need to address the calendar for 2013-2014.

MOTION (Epstein/Downie): That the Academic Council form a standing Calendar Review Subcommittee. The subcommittee should consist of two members elected each
year from among the members of the Academic Council. The subcommittee is charged with reviewing all Fairfield academic calendars before their publication and making any necessary recommendations for changes to the Academic Council and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Rakowitz: In favor.

**MOTION PASSED: 17 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

Downie: Many thanks for this report, Bob, a very informative report.

**7b. Proposal from SOE for new 5-year BS/MS in Computer Engineering (attachment).**

Beal: Doug Lyon is passing out a complete proposal that has more than is in your packet. What we are proposing is a 5-year dual degree BS/MS course of study, by combining the currently-offered SOE curricula for the BS degree and the Master of Science degree. This is driven by industry, that is asking our graduates to have more and more skills. Our engineering advisory board is asking for the same thing. The parents of potential students are asking about this as well, for a 4+2 master’s degree, but this moves toward a shorter framework. We don’t expect this to be a huge program, we will have just a few taking this option. What we are asking is to combine two programs we currently have, in undergrad and grad, into a new 5 year dual degree. These two programs require, separately, ABET accreditation. One problem is that of the thesis, as students can do this. By the time students are done with 98 credits, with high academic achievement, they can decide about proceeding into the graduate program. Students could do it a bit faster by adding summers, though they generally need the summer for work and internship experience.

Questions: Lasseter: will the current two-year program be retained? Do you expect to hire additional adjuncts or faculty for this? Lyon: No. Lasseter: what effect will this have on the cross-listing of courses, consolidation of courses. Will there be any impact there? Lyon: no, there would be some good cross-listing of courses. Walker-Canton: so, what is the difference between the five year versus the 2 year and 4 year degree? Lyon: the 5 year degree saves time and money. On a paper point of view, looks like the same degree. To work with other schools, the SOE is retaining their 2 and 4 years programs as well. Walker-Canton: Is the number of credit hours the same? Lyon: the 6 year plan would have a few more credit hours. Winn: an exciting program. But many of the courses seem more like software engineering than computer engineering. Rafalski: minor point, math 351 needs more than calculus 2 as a pre-requisite, yes? Consult with math program, please. Dennin: on original p. 21, MA 231 seems to be out of sequence? Also, the credits are wrong for 131, so there are 3 more credits than in table 2b. Also, the benchmarks -- Berkeley, Carnegie-Mellon? Are these our competitors? What about more immediate competitors? Need better information. Lyon: those schools are aspirational comparisons. What about the student quality, how large is the potential audience for this? Dennin concludes that he has some serious problems with the presentation.

More questions: Dennin: in the EPC minutes, “the demand for this is high” – where is the data for this assertion? Beal: we do have people asking for this program. Huntley: this is resource neutral? Lyon: yes, this will not require any other lines. Huntley: so are we looking for new students? Lyon: this is our search for a new business model to increase enrollment in general for the SOE, to raise revenue. Epstein: how does the undergraduate core curriculum fit in? The model is jam-packed. I see that the three EN electives are there, HI is on there, but VPA, semester 2? Lyon: That will be graphic design. There is no language requirement for engineers. There are five core classes in the fourth year, but only two in the second year. Is there some reason that more core is offered in the senior year? Beal: we are trying to get our students set up for the fourth year senior project, so the EG courses have to be lined up early. EG students right now are loaded with core
courses in their senior year. Rakowitz: 5 year to 6 year comparison. The end is that the proposed MA is 2/3 the size of the 2 year MA.

Lyon: we want students to be able to graduate after 4 years with a bachelor’s degree. We do have some grad courses in the 4th year. Fitzgerald: the students are taking courses that are already offered. Have you talked to GSEAP about their success in developing a five-year program? Lyon: it’s going like gangbusters for them, though I don’t expect to have that success. Lasseter: Why a fourth year senior project versus a fifth year’s master’s thesis. Lyon: it’s an ABET thing, ABET wants a team approach to the project. The ABET accreditation is important, some places like Sikorsky won’t hire our students if we don’t retain our ABET accreditation. Our students can do an optional thesis. Lasseter: these accomplish the 5-year program by overlapping undergraduate and graduate electives. Rakowitz: is there any sacrifice in the number of actual graduate courses, or does this plan simply replace undergrad courses with grad courses that are similar? Lyon: on the electrical engineering side. We do have courses that are the same for grads and undergrads, with cross-listed courses. Vogel: how much will this program boost Fairfield as an option? Huntley: what I remember from ABET is that you can have either the undergrad or the grad program as ABET? Why not the grad program for the thesis? Lyon: as most of our students seek only an undergrad degree, we need to be sure they have an ABET-accredited program. ABET-accredited graduate programs are not as customary. He: I’m curious: how do you cross-list a course between both undergraduate and graduate programs? Lyon: what they can do is to waive a domain requirement, but not the total credit hour requirement. So no double-dipping for the total credit hour question.

Fitzgerald: Is it the will of the council to recess?

MOTION (Fitzgerald/Rakowitz): To recess this meeting of the Academic Council until 3:30 pm on Monday, March 18th, 2013.
MOTION PASSED: 11 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstention

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Dallavalle, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies